
DC Fire & EMS Patient Care Policies: Patient Released On Scene

I. Intent

1. To allow a patient an alternative to transport by ambulance to an acute care hospital that is medically appropriate and respects the rights of a competent adult to make prudent decisions.

II. Policy



Note Well: *Patients Who Are Released at the Scene by a Paramedic Must Meet All of the Following Criteria.*

1. The patient **must have** a clearly articulated plan for medical evaluation and/or follow-up that relies on previously established medical providers or the use of recognized acute care/urgent care providers and facilities.
2. This plan **must have** a reasonable and prudent transportation plan to reach follow-up medical care.
3. After complete evaluation the paramedic **must concur** with the appropriateness of scene release and the medical appropriateness of the follow-up plan.
4. The EMS Supervisor **must concur** with the overall appropriateness of the follow-up plan.
5. Patients with minor traumatic injuries **must not** meet critical trauma criteria.
6. Medical complaints **must not** be of new onset (first time symptoms).
7. The patient **must sign** an appropriate release form stating that emergency evaluation has been rendered, transportation offered, and that the patient chooses an alternative evaluation plan.

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II. Policy (continued)

8. The CQI Office ***will audit 100% of scene releases*** under this policy, based on available data, for medical appropriateness, compliance with department policy, and compliance with Department of Health regulatory policies.



Note Well: A paramedic under this policy Will Not release the following classes of patients at scene. Refer to the Patient Initiated Refusal of Service for alternatives if appropriate.

9. Patients requesting ambulance transport ***shall not*** be denied transport under this policy.
10. ***Any new onset*** medical complaints such as seizures, headache, hypoglycemia, respiratory distress, etc. will not be released at the scene under this policy.
11. Paramedics may not knowingly release a patient under this policy ***more than once*** in a 24-hour period.
12. ***Children under 1 year of age*** or ***the elderly*** (where assessment is difficult) shall not be released under this policy.
13. ***Minors under 18*** shall not be released under this policy except at the request of parent or guardian, and only when there are no life threatening signs or symptoms.
14. A complete patient care report must be accomplished, including two sets of vitals signs and results of the physical exam.